



What Are 4-H Clubs?

They are groups of young people, chiefly in rural and suburban areas, who carry on a wide variety of farming, homemaking, community service, and other projects. They raise livestock and poultry, grow gardens and field crops, conserve the soil, sew, cook, preserve food, make things for their homes, and work for community betterment.

Any boy or girl between 10 and 21 years of age may join by agreeing to follow 4-H ideals and standards. The main requirement is a willingness to "learn by doing," which is the club slogan, and "to make the best better," which is the club motto. Character development and good citizenship are long-range goals.

By 1956 there were about 90,000 4-H Clubs with more than 2,156,000 members in all 48 States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. In the past half century, 4-H has helped to develop nearly 20,000,000 young citizens who have participated in its program.

Who Conducts 4-H Work?

The 4-H program is a part of the national educational system of cooperative extension work, which the United States Department of Agriculture, the State land-grant colleges, and the counties share. The Federal Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., gives national leadership and the State extension services give State leadership to the program. Two important groups helping to further the program are the National Committee on Boys and Girls Club Work, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago 5, Ill., and the National 4-H Club Foundation, 8561 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Md.

What Does "4-H" Mean?

The term "4-H" refers to "head," "heart," "hands," and "health," which are emphasized in the

club program, and which imply these educational objectives of members:

HEAD—To learn the value of science through applying the latest scientific knowledge to farming and homemaking projects.

HEART—To develop wholesome character and personality and the qualities of good citizenship, often through working together.

HANDS—To acquire useful skills in farming, homemaking, mechanics, and vocational trades.

HEALTH—To cultivate good health habits which lead to satisfying, happy living.

What Are the 4-H "Guideposts"?

Ten guideposts are used by cooperative extension workers and volunteer leaders to aid 4-H members in analyzing their situations, needs, and interests. These point the way to building programs that will prepare the young people for better living—physically, mentally, and spiritually:

1. *Develop talents for greater usefulness.*
2. *Join with friends for work, fun, and fellowship.*
3. *Learn to live in a changing world.*
4. *Choose a way to earn a living.*
5. *Produce food and fiber for home and market.*
6. *Create better homes for better living.*
7. *Conserve nature's resources for security and happiness.*
8. *Build health for a strong America.*
9. *Share responsibilities for community improvement.*
10. *Serve as citizens in maintaining world peace.*

How Do 4-H Clubs Function?

As in the democracy in which they live, 4-H'ers themselves largely run their clubs, elect their officers, help plan and hold their meetings, and select their projects. Each club drafts its own programs to suit its members and the localities in which they live.

To guide 4-H'ers, thousands of public-spirited men and women, mostly parents, serve as unpaid volunteer local leaders. Some of these are older club members or youth who assist as junior leaders. The leaders are trained, counseled, and assisted by the county agents of the Cooperative Extension Service, who have available

to them the vast stores of scientific knowledge in the State land-grant colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture. Leaders advise and encourage 4-H'ers in planning and carrying out projects, attend meetings, visit members to see how projects are getting along, offer suggestions where needed, and accompany members to club events outside the community.

County, district, and State council groups are active in many areas to help plan and conduct various phases of 4-H Club work. Such groups add vitality to the program. They provide a chance for many interested and qualified persons to share in determining the course and extending the values of 4-H Club work.

Where Were 4-H Clubs Founded?

4-H Club work grew out of a situation and a need in rural America. It had its roots in many places, and many persons guided the movement in its formative years. At about the turn of the century, in several different localities, rural young people began uniting their efforts in learn-to-do-by-doing activities centered on improved agriculture. Various agricultural leaders began discovering that one of the best ways to get scientific methods used on farms and in homes was to start with youth.

Between 1901 and 1905 interested leaders of these groups began to get together to talk over their common aims and set up general patterns for organization and activity. Some years later they adopted the 4-H name and emblem. In 1914 Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act which provided for cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, including what was then known as "boys' and girls' club work." This law also provided for the system of Federal funds to be matched by the States and counties as the basis of financial support for the educational program.

Although no one place or date can be designated nationally as the start of what is now 4-H Club work, various States appropriately pay tribute to their own beginnings, their pioneers, and their program advancement.

What Are the Emblem and Pledge?

The national 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover, with a letter "H" on each leaf. Club colors are green and white.

The white background of the 4-H flag symbolizes purity; the green of the emblem represents nature's most common color, and is also symbolic of youth, life, and growth. The national pledge reads:

"I pledge—

My Head to clearer thinking,

My Heart to greater loyalty,

My Hands to larger service,

My Health to better living,

**for my club, my community, and my
country."**

How Widespread Are 4-H Clubs?

The 4-H Club idea now circles the globe. More than 40 countries, in widely separated areas of the world, have adopted all or part of the plan and adapted it to their own needs and conditions. The movement in some places is identified as 4-H Clubs and uses the familiar green four-leaf clover emblem. Elsewhere the local adaptation makes the program peculiarly individual.

Many people in distant lands have learned about 4-H Club work and the high caliber of American youth by getting a firsthand acquaintance through the International Farm Youth Exchange. This is a real two-way exchange because, through it, young people here go to other countries and young people of other lands come here—each to live, work, and share experiences for several months with farm families.

Wherever they are, 4-H Club members strive individually and with each other for better citizenship, better living, better family cooperation, and better world understanding.

MORE INFORMATION ON 4-H CLUB WORK—

may be obtained from county 4-H Club agents, agricultural extension agents, or home demonstration agents, who usually have their offices in county seats. Other sources are the Cooperative Extension Service of the State land-grant colleges, or the Federal Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

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